

Message Text

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FOR PGM/P, VOA,PL, AR

E.O. 11652: N/A
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT SOMOZA'S NEWS CONFERENCE WITH FOREIGN
CORRESPONDENTS, AUGUST 29.

1. PRESIDENT SOMOZA MET WITH 25 MEMBERS OF THE INTER-
NATIONAL PRESS CORPS FOR ABOUT 40 MINUTES YESTERDAY.
EXCEPT FOR TWO QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS IN SPANISH THE
ENTIRE SESSION WAS CONDUCTED IN ENGLISH.

2. IN HIS OPENING STATEMENT THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT THE
ISSUE TODAY WAS THE SURVIVAL OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT
IN NICARAGUA AND THAT "ALTHOUGH FAR FROM BEING A PER-
FECT DEMOCRACY...NICARAGUA IS MUCH MORE DEMOCRATIC NOW
THAN IN ANY OTHER PERIOD OF ITS HISTORY". TO INSURE
"THIS MARCH TOWARDS DEMOCRACY" THE PRESIDENT SAID HE
WOULD REMAIN IN OFFICE UNTIL HIS TERM EXPIRED.

3. HE SAID THE "SO-CALLED FRENTE AMPLIO DE OPOSI-
CION" (FAO) HAD BEEN ASKING HIM TO RESIGN IN FAVOR
OF AN "NATIONAL GOVERNMENT". HIS SUGGESTION TO
THEM, HE SAID, WAS THEAT "THEY TAKE THEIR CASE TO
THE VOTERS". SAYING THAT
THE FAO ALLEGES THAT THE
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LIBERAL PARTY WILL NOT PERMIT A FREE AND OPEN ELEC-
TION, HE THEN INVITED THE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS
TO COME IN 1981 TO WITNESS THE ELECTIONS "AND TELL
THE WORLD WHAT THEY FIND". HE ALSO SAID THE NEXT
ELECTIONS WOULD BE OBSERVED BY "AS MANY AS THEY
COULD BRING THROUGH THE OAS".

4. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT AT THE REQUEST OF THE CONSERVATIVES THE ELECTORAL PROCESS HAD BEEN OPENED UP TO OTHER IDEOLOGIES BUT THE ANSWER OF THE SANDINISTAS WAS MORE VIOLENCE. "NOW THEY SAY IT IS THE RIFLE THAT IS GOING TO MAKE SOMOZA GO. I SAY THE VOTES ARE WHAT WILL MAKE ME GO". HE SAID THAT THIS ATTITUDE OF THE TERRORISTS MEANS MORE PERSONS ARE GOING TO BE INJURED WHICH NEITHER HE NOR THE LIBERAL PARTY NOR THE NATIONAL GUARD WANTED. "THE NATIONAL GUARD HAS DONE NOTHING MORE THAN TO TRY TO DEFEND THEMSELVES AND THE INSTITUTION FROM ATTACKS...IT IS NOT JUST TO CALL THIS REPRESSION". THE PRESIDENT THEN CALLED UPON THE PRESS TO THINK FOR THEMSELVES ABOUT NICARAGUA AND NOT ACCEPT "PREFABRICATED JUDGEMENTS" IN RESPECT TO THE COUNTRY".

5. DURING THE QUESTION PERIOD THE PRESIDENT SAID HE HAD NO PLANS TO TRAVEL TO WASHINGTON AND THAT HE HAD HAD NO CONTACT WITH ANYONE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL STAFF. IN REFERENCE TO THE NATIONAL GUARD HE SAID HE HAD THEIR SUPPORT "98 PER CENT". ("I AM NOT GOD SO EVERYONE IS NOT ON MY SIDE"). THE GUARD WAS NOT ACTING ON ITS OWN, AS SOME HAD SUGGESTED, BUT RATHER "IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION AND LAWS". HE SAID HE HAD NO INTENTION OF INVOKING MARTIAL LAW.

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6. THE PRESIDENT REACTED STRONGLY TO A VENEZUELAN REPORTER'S STATEMENT THAT NICARAGUANS "HAD BEEN DENIED PEACE AND TRANQUILITY FOR SUCH A LONG TIME" BY POINTING OUT THAT THE REPORTER WAS BADLY INFORMED BY A PRESS THAT HAS POLITICAL SIDES AND CONNOTATIONS. IN ANSWER TO ANOTHER SPANISH SPEAKING REPORTER THE PRESIDENT SAID YES, HE BELIEVED THAT THERE WERE GROUPS IN VENEZUELA, HONDURAS, COSTA RICA AND PANAMA FROM WHOM THE FSLN WAS RECEIVING ASSISTANCE. HE EMPHASIZED HE WAS SPEAKING OF GROUPS. ITEM

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